

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR 1918.

Gentlemen,

The Local Government Board recognising the strain imposed upon all workers by the conditions of war, requires only a modified report this year instead of the usual detailed one. The shortage of paper has also to be considered.

The Tables received from the Registrar General produce a death rate of 14.33 per 1000, the population for this purpose being estimated at 6888, the death rate last year being 13.45, the estimated population being 7063.

The Birth rate this year is 13.60 per 1000, estimated population being 7712, last year the birth rate was 13.93 per 1000, on an estimated population of 7873.

There were 3 deaths of infants under 1 year old (2 male and 1 female) One of these was illegitimate.

The Health of the Borough during the year cannot be described as good. There were 369 cases of measles notified, with 1 death. There were 7 deaths attributed to Influenza. As a rule they were complicated with Pneumonia. Leaflets giving advice as to the prevention of the disease were circulated. In October there was a very serious outbreak of Influenza causing 3 deaths in one house. The infection was imported from France. Septic Pneumonia causing death. It was highly infectious and several of those nursing contracted the disease.

There was an outbreak of the same type of disease raging at the Cape of Good Hope and at Lisbon, hundreds of people died there in 1918.

Owing to the dearth of labour little Sanitary constructive work was carried out. Nevertheless insanitary conditions requiring urgent attention were dealt with by your Surveyor, and the work of the past found the Town in a good Sanitary condition at the outbreak of War. The Water supply is good and the drainage is good.

The Cottages erected by the Council at Englands as far as they go relieve the want of good housing accommodation.

The Isolation Hospital is in a thoroughly efficient condition.

On April the 10th., it came to my knowledge that children had returned home from a School where Diphtheria was present. I took swabs from all the children and also from some suspicious contacts. There were 5 infected houses. In 7 instances the result of examination of the Swabs was positive. These were all carefully isolated. They made good recoveries and the disease did not spread.

During the year 23 cases of Diphtheria were notified. The first case was notified on February 22nd., then a case on March 2nd., and 18th., 20th., & 25th., then the imported cases mentioned before, then some cases in June, August and October, one case each in November and December. 17 of these cases were removed to the Isolation Hospital for treatment.

17 cases of Scarlatina were notified, the 1st. on January 4th., then on the 10th., 14th., and 18th., 3 cases in February then some cases in June and November. Nearly all these cases were removed to the Isolation Hospital.

As regards the future, the housing question is the most important. Slums we have still although some of the worst have been done away with.

The ~~arrangement~~ made to provide allotment gardens were of much use, providing healthy exercise and wholesome food during the War. I hope they may be continued by the occupiers.

SCHEDULE OF DEATHS AND CAUSES.
(Civilians only)

Causes of Death.	Males.	Females.
Measles	1	
Diphtheria and croup	1	1
Influenza	1	5
Pulmonary tuberculosis	6	4
Tuberculosis meningitis	2	
Other Tuberculous diseases	1	1
Cancer, malignant disease	5	4
Rheumatic fever	1	
Organic heart disease	5	7
Bronchitis	1	3
Pneumonia (all forms)	3	8
Other respiratory diseases	1	2
Congenital debility etc.	1	
Violence, apart from suicide	1	
Suicide	1	
Other defined diseases	14	18
	45	53.
Deaths of infants under 1 year of age	2	1
Total births	63	43
	males	females
Legitimate	63	43
Illegitimate	1	-

W. J. Brinee Jr. Oct 11

-Chippenhams Rural District Council-

Medical Officer's Annual Report for the year 1918.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In consequence of the dearth of paper the Local Government Board do not require this year the elaborate details which they like to see in the annual reports of Medical Officers of Health throughout the country.

If we take 12918 to be the population and the number of deaths to be 203 the death rate works out to be 15.72. The number of births were 216 this in a population of 14464 makes a birth rate of 14.93.

Last year the death rate was 15.79 and the birth rate 13.48.

During the year Influenza was present in most of the villages the disease seemed to come to all in turn. In some instances the village schools were closed. There were 34 deaths Lung complications frequently followed, there were 12 deaths recorded from Pneumonia.

During the year 84 cases of diphtheria were notified 45 of these were removed to the Isolation Hospital, there were 9 deaths. 38 of these cases occurred during the first 4 months of the year. Searches were made for carriers which were found and isolated. Most of the cases were resident in Corsham and Lacock. 20 cases of Scarlatina were notified 15 were treated in the Isolation Hospital, there were no deaths.

On May 8th Dr. Higgs of Castle Combe notified a case of Poliomyelitis the patient lay for many weeks apparently dying but finally recovered. She was seen by Dr. Pearce, one of the Local Government Board Inspectors, the case was full of interest, the cause could not be traced.

The prevalence of epidemic disease in Corsham caused the quality of the drinking water which comes from Foxwell Derry Hill to be called in question. An analysis was made by the County Analyst who pronounced it to be of good quality. You also instructed Mr. Rhodes your Surveyor to make a thorough inspection and plan of the sewers of the town of Corsham, improvement will be carried out in the near future when labour is available. It is recognized that the present conditions are not satisfactory.

At the close of the War the sanitary condition of the district as good as could be expected although some large scheme under consideration had to be postponed. The Housing and Town planning Committee had received reports of the inspection made by myself and your Surveyor Mr Rhodes as a result a large number of improvements were made in the houses occupied by the working classes conditions were therefore better when the war ended than if the works had been delayed. The War of course made it difficult and in some cases impossible to get work done. Of the more important work now demanding attention are the Coatham Drainage and the water supply of Kingston St Michael. As regards the number of houses required in the various villages much depends upon the number of houses erected near the working centres as many men now live in the country & work in the towns no house being available.

Your obedient servant

Wm Tho. Bruce, B.A., M.D.
Medical Officer of Health.

Causes of Death in the Chippenham Rural District 1918.

Causes of Death.	Males	Females
All causes - Civilian only	104	99
Measles	1	
Whooping cough	6	3
Diphtheria & Croup		
Influenza	17	17
Pulmonary tuberculosis	8	4
Cancer, malignant disease	9	5
Rheumatic fever		1
Organic heart disease	15	11
Bronchitis	4	14
Pneumonia (all forms)	7	5
Other respiratory diseases	1	
Diarrhoea &c (under 2 years)	1	
Appendicitis & typhlitis	1	
Eclampsia & liver		2
Nephritis & Bright's disease	2	
Congenital debility &c	4	1
Violence, apart from suicide		1
Other defined diseases	27	34
Other tuberculous diseases		1
Deaths of infants under 1 year of age.	8	6
Total Births	103	113
Legitimate	100	102
Illegitimate	3	11
Population for purposes of Birth rate.	14,467.	
" " " " Death "	12911	

